

May 13, 2002

AGAR ADVISORY

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF PROCUREMENT AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT
AGAR ADVISORY NO. 46**

USDA Blanket Purchase Agreement for Office Supplies

INTRODUCTION: This Agriculture Acquisition Regulation (AGAR) Advisory announces the availability of a Department of Agriculture (USDA) Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) for office supplies.

SUMMARY: USDA signed a BPA with Boise Cascade Office Products to (1) offer purchase card holders a fast, efficient, and low cost tool to acquire office supplies using a web-based tool; assure that Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act (JWOD) Program products are acquired when they are available; (3) provide a measurement technique to document the purchase of JWOD products; and (4) accomplish these things with a savings in agency management costs.

SPECIFIC ISSUES:

WHO MAY USE THE BPA: Any USDA employee with a Contracting Officer's Warrant or the authority to acquire office supplies by purchase card may use the BPA without the need for further authorization. Employees in situations where their agency has awarded a contract or agency-BPA for office supplies should look to the ordering instructions for that contract or agency-BPA before using this BPA. However, if that contract or agency-BPA does not provide JWOD products, the employee must look to alternative sources to acquire JWOD products such as this USDA BPA.

SOURCING: USDA sought and evaluated submittals for a nation-wide blanket purchase agreement (BPA) against the General Services Administration's (GSA) multiple award schedule contracts for desk-top delivery of office supplies. The BPA was signed with the vendor offering the lowest evaluated cost.

COMPETITION REQUIREMENTS: No additional competition is required. The GSA multiple award schedule contract and the BPA were both competed. There are no multiple award schedule contract or BPA order limitations.

PRODUCTS AVAILABLE: Under the terms of the GSA multiple award schedule contract all the products included in the Boise Cascade Office Products catalog are available. This provides our employees a one-stop shopping opportunity for a wide variety of office products.

PRICING: Boise Cascade Office Products offered the lowest evaluated pricing. Price discounts for USDA users differ by product area and are as much as 19 percent below the standard GSA multiple award schedule pricing. Increased discounts can be added for large volume orders and agency-managed orders. After USDA competed prices between the GSA multiple award schedule contracts, no further price comparison is required by the ordering officials.

TIME FOR DELIVERY: The GSA multiple award schedule contract and the USDA BPA are based on “next day” delivery to the customer’s location. Delivery is either by Boise Cascade Office Products-operated trucks or by United Parcel Service (UPS). In some rural locations, delivery is by two-day UPS service. Delivery to residences (work-at-home employees) is by UPS.

REGISTRATION: Users must register with Boise Cascade Office Products either by phone or over the Internet through the link located on the USDA “Acquisition Toolkit” at www.usda.gov/procurement/toolkit/index.html. Instructions for both registration methods are found in the “Boise Solution Center” linked to the “Acquisition Toolkit.” Web-based registration is found at the Boise Solution Center link labeled “BCOP.com Registration.” Telephone registration instructions are found at the Boise Solution Center link labeled “Procedures.”

ORDERING: After registration in the ordering system, users may place orders via the Internet or by phone or facsimile. Payment is expected to be by the purchase card. Facsimile order confirmations are available. Order status and histories are stored in the web-based system as well as saved-order formats should a customer anticipate recurring needs. Delivery address information can be re-entered (or saved) for each order to enable ordering officials to serve a variety of offices.

SECURITY: Sensitive data, such as a purchase card number, is protected in the system by “SSL3” technology tools. Card numbers are purged from the system after use.

SMALL BUSINESS ISSUES: The GSA multiple award schedule contract vendors, large and small, were asked to participate in the BPA. Typically, purchase card buys are under the \$2,500 micro-purchase threshold and are not subject to small business set-aside procedures. Ordering officials placing orders for other than JWOD items, in excess of the micro-purchase threshold, should give preference to the items of small business concerns when two or more items at the same delivered price will satisfy the requirement. Small business subcontractors under the BPA may assist you in meeting this requirement.

CONTACT POINTS: Agencies are encouraged to add their purchase card agency program coordinators, their local area program coordinators, and others as needed to the Boise Solution Center link labeled “Contact.” This will allow their users to reach the appropriate contact persons for questions, assistance or additional information.

MANAGEMENT OF REPORTING: Boise Cascade Office Products offers agency level reporting of acquisitions under the BPA. Reasonable reporting requirements are

included at no additional cost. Each purchase card agency program coordinator (or other staff member identified by the Head of Contracting Activity Designee) should contact Boise Cascade Office Products through Chris Magee (Chris.Magee@BoiseOffice.com) at the earliest opportunity to structure their own reporting by pre-defining the data elements used in registration.

BPA NOT MANDATORY: The BPA is offered for use but its use is not required. However, the BPA brings USDA cheaper prices than found on the competing multiple award schedules, customized reporting, and reductions in agency overhead. In addition, each agency needs to assure that its buyers acquire JWOD products whenever a JWOD item or a JWOD like item is needed. Agencies not using the BPA will need to create alternate systems in order to measure JWOD purchase levels.

If you have questions about this advisory, please contact J. R. Holcombe Jr. by telephone at (202) 720-8484, by fax at (202) 720-8972, or by email at Richard.Holcombe@usda.gov. This advisory is available at <http://www.usda.gov/procurement/policy/advisories.html>.

EXPIRATION DATE: This Advisory remains in effect until cancelled.

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